

*W. Spofford With Compliments to
P. G. Washington*

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Oration,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE ASSOCIATION

OF THE

OLDEST INHABITANTS

OF THE

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

IN WASHINGTON, ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1867.

BY

The Hon. Peter G. Washington,

One of its Vice-Presidents.



WASHINGTON:

JOHN T. BURCH, STATIONER.

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then abounded, and displayed itself, throughout the war, in the individual sacrifices it yielded to the common cause. The habits of the country were almost entirely rural. A rich and virgin soil repaid the labors of agriculture. Men were content with the quiet enjoyments, and to perform the retired offices, of life—the education of their children, the practice of hospitality, and other neighborly duties and amenities—without an aspiration beyond. General WASHINGTON, in his retirement at Mount Vernon, after the close of the French war, who was by nature and sentiment an agriculturist, was a specimen of the country gentleman of his day. He relinquished the habits of life which were congenial to his tastes, and yielded himself, at the call of his country, to years of exile, toil, and risk, with no other motive than to serve and defend it.

The Declaration of Independence, which has just been read so impressively by our friend Dr. Blake, is a summary of political wisdom, as it was an act of devoted patriotism. It enumerates, as you have seen, the wrongs which impelled the colonies to that measure, pronounces their connection with the crown of Great Britain “severed,” and assumes that “as free and independent States they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and do all such other acts and things which independent States may of right do.”

If it shall be found upon examination that the American people, possessing as they do, a territory which is fraught with every sort of industrial capability, have wisely and beneficially exercised the enumerated powers thus assumed for the nascent State, and have, under the unenumerated, done all those things which were necessary for the general welfare, the progress of civilization, and the happiness and elevation of man; in other words, have fully acted out the correlative obligations of these assumptions, then there will appear proportional ground for the just pride we feel in our country, our race, and our institutions.

Of this broad land, framed in the prodigality of nature, with the loftiest mountains, the largest rivers, the richest valleys, a climate so healthful, and a soil and sub-soil so

various and productive, what shall be said? That it presents to its favored owners every bounty of sea and land, the soil and the mine. Is there any one thing which is necessary to the subsistence or comfort of man, that it does not offer to his industry and enterprise? Ask the coasts of the oceans and sea that lave it, the Atlantic, the Gulf and the Pacific, and they reply, we are your barriers against the tyrannies, the misery, of Europe. Dotted with islets and indented with bays of every size and form, we furnish harbors for your shipping, and nurseries for its seamen. Our native denizens garnish the tables of rich and poor, and our annual visitants spread themselves up your rivers, as the quails fell amidst the tents of the Israelites. Ask the rivers and they reply, we run from North to South, cutting more than twenty degrees of latitude, and pass, in counter-exchange, your sub-arctic and sub-tropical products. Ask the lakes—Superior, Huron, Michigan, Erie, and Ontario—that vast chain of inland seas, falling consecutively the one into another, not to omit Champlain and George, and they reply, before you had roads or wagons, when the mountains were brought forth, we were here—destined to your earliest uses. Our aboriginal canoe has grown to the tall craft or the capacious steamer. On our bosoms unfettered commerce unfolds its native beauties, growing with your growth and strengthening with your strength, and exchanging the diverse climatic products, and mingling in intercourse, harmony and love the sons of America, of either side. Ask the soil and it points to king cotton, to its rice, sugar, tobacco, wheat, and to the cattle on a thousand prairies, which browsing on their rich grasses, interspersed with the medicinal rosin weed, reflect the rays of the sun from their glossy sides. Ask the mines and they reply, behold “a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.” Out of which you may also dig gold and silver, copper and lead. Yes, and diamonds—the black diamond—of abundance inexhaustible—of price “richer than rubies.” In these are laid up for your use, the heats of ages of suns. It is the Promethean fire of national vitality. Dig these and be prosperous—be power-

ful, and in proportion as we make you powerful, be peaceful. Abuse not the power we give to oppress less favored peoples. Heap not our coals upon their heads, even for real or imaginary wrongs, but use them, rather, to light up on your hill-tops, beacons of liberty and fraternity to which the oppressed of the nations may resort.

The war commenced in mere resistance, became aggressive for independence. Two other foreign wars have followed. The war of the Revolution lasted from 1775 to 1783. The second war with Great Britain from 1812 to 1815, and the war with Mexico from 1846 to 1848.

There need be but a bare allusion, without detail, to our quasi war with Revolutionary France in 1798, a mere war of reprisals, resulting in a few captures at sea ; and to the war with Tripoli in 1802, impinging, as it did, on the regencies of Tunis, Algiers, and Morocco, which stopped the depredations of those powers on our commerce, and rescued our citizens held by them in bondage. These wars were fought by our navy, yet in its infancy. In both, the promise of its germ in the revolution was maintained with a prestige of discipline, skill and daring, which has grown with its adolescence and established the eminence of its manhood.

Returning to the three principal wars mentioned, who can look on the first, even at this late day, without a shudder at the inequality of the forces opposed? On the one hand, a nation of nearly twenty millions of people, of strong government, formidable on land, the mistress on the seas, rich in commerce and manufactures, abounding in all the elements of war, and practised in it. In fine, whose conquests had then covered the world? On the other, a people of about three millions, scattered thinly along a coast of more than a thousand miles, from Maine to Georgia, unused to war, poor, without manufactures, but little commerce, and subsisting chiefly by husbandry. These people had been held, perhaps designedly, under a number of distinct colonial governments. The colonies differed from one another in character, climate and habits. Under the regal government, they had their mutual jealousies. These jealousies continued after

they threw that government off, and they were unwilling to adopt, perhaps from a memory of its oppressions, any other, or at least any that should possess equal authority, in its stead. These jealousies, whether of the colonies or individuals, can hardly be much censured, as they had their source in an intense love of liberty; but it is certain that they bore throughout the war, the bitter fruits of weak and divided counsels, and lead to questions of command and of concert of action in the field. It was not until the war had lasted five years, that articles of confederation were agreed to between the colonies, now States, and neither under these articles did congress possess, any more than it had assumed to exercise before, the authority to bind the States, far less the people of the States. Its only authority seems to have been to apportion amongst the several States the troops and supplies required, and to call upon them from time to time for their respective quotas—requisitions which it had no power to enforce, and which were complied with, with varying delays and deficiencies, accordingly as the respective States were more or less exposed, and perhaps as they were more or less zealously affected towards the war. We had advanced somewhat in political wisdom in 1789, and have advanced further since, and can now clearly see that the essence of government was not in the Congress of that day. The astonishment is how affairs could have been carried on under the polity adopted, with the consequent conviction that the impotency of government, or rather the utter absence of any real government over the whole, was the greatest impediment to the successful prosecution of the war. Perhaps the nearest approach to government was the authority of the commander-in-chief, so far as he deemed it right for him to exercise it, but this authority had little other sanction than his weight of character, his known devotion to the cause, and the force and frequency of his arguments and expostulations addressed to congress and to the governors of the States, and of his appeals to the people, for coöperation and support. There was no conscription to compel; there was no high bounty in money or land to allure. “*Sa réputation lui fit une armée.*”

Paucity in numbers, poverty in supplies, Providence in mercy made this a defensive war. Upon this Fabian principle were fought the battles of Long Island, White Plains, Brandywine, and others. It is not necessary nor pleasant to describe them, for blood and carnage are not agreeable retrospects to sexagenarians, and besides it is not necessary to claim for our troops, chiefly militia, in that war, superior bravery to their enemy, nor to deny what is probably true, that all peoples are brave in a right cause, properly directed, supplied and drilled. But the preliminaries of battles and their results are inductive of the genius and tone of peoples. In the antecedents and sequels of these of ours, we *se complairent* to find genius in the *lead*, endurance in the *led*, and that humanity in both which could see, even in an enemy when fallen, the universal brotherhood of man, the common work of God, the common purchase of Christ.

It was WASHINGTON's distinction in the *lead*, to maintain for eight years an inferior army in front of a superior, to attack it from time to time, often with success, but never to the risk of the entire destruction of his little force. We admire his generalship in withdrawing his defeated army without loss, from Long Island, and afterwards from New York, and his boldness in confronting the enemy on the Bronx and giving him battle at White Plains; but the heart beats—all our sympathies are awakened by the perils of his retreat across the Jerseys, anxiously expecting that English LEE, who never intended to join him, taking strong positions and yielding his ground, step by step. He escapes across the Delaware, his army reduced to 3,000 men. We breathe! WASHINGTON has interposed a broad river between his little force and his powerful foe; but what is there left? The cause seems lost! There is a God of battles, who does not always give victory to the strong. WASHINGTON, in a few days recrosses the Delaware, captures Trenton and returns with a thousand prisoners. Crosses again and captures Princeton. Confidence is restored; the holy cause is saved. To recapitulate further instances of WASHINGTON's generalship would be but to reiterate the eulogies of history, the suffrages of all military adepts.

The hardihood of the troops was a fit accompaniment to the genius of their commander—campaigning in winter, ill clad and ill fed, marching in the snow without shoes, and tracking it with their blood ! Did ever men “ stand between their loved homes and war’s desolation,” and endure, and as uncomplainingly, so much ? Whence came this Decian-like devotion in common men—in militia ? Their bodies were hardened by virtuous agricultural toil. They were resolved to be free, and they were Americans. “ *Ils avaient, en naissant, cet air du nouveau monde, si jeune, si vivace, si pétillant.* ”

On the score of humanity, the contrast between the parties was quite as great as in any other of their respective peculiarities and conditions. The arming of the savage against our frontier, the massacre of Wyoming, the burning of defenceless villages, the butchery of Baylor’s men, the brutalities of the Hessians, the murder of Hayne, the horrors of the Jersey Prison Ship and Sugar House, were provocations for doing our part towards brutalizing the war, which it was hard to resist. General WASHINGTON, indeed, remonstrated sharply with the British on many of these enormities, and threatened retaliation, but he was opposed to this terrible and doubtful remedy, except under the direst necessity, and deeply felt the monstrosity of taking the life of one man, although an enemy, for a crime committed by another. It was under the influence of these sentiments that he caused Asgill, justly held in confinement under the *lex talionis* to be released ; and the young, handsome, and gallant captain, instead of being hung, was restored to the arms of his doting mother—and probably some others.

But these atrocities are long since gone by, and with them their exasperations, and their unmerciful or mistaken authors, who unhappily thought no measures too harsh which might bring rebels to submission, and who, moreover, fought for national existence if they shared the opinion, as they doubtless did, of Lord GEORGE GORDON, who told GEORGE THE III he looked upon the independence of America and the destruction of the British monarchy, as synonymous.

Yorktown closed the war. The gratitude justly due to

France, for her aid in its capture, has ever been part and parcel of the American character. Its crowning glory, doubtless, was WASHINGTON'S surrender of his sword to congress, and his retirement to the walks of private life.

In any account of the Revolutionary war this illustrious man must needs stand in the foreground. In closing this, two remarks are due to him. First, his immoveable calmness under unprovoked hostility—unfounded detraction. The intrigues, the cabals, the *spargere voces in vulgum ambiguas* in Congress, of LEE, GATES, CONWAY, even of some of his trusted friends, never diverted him from his patriotic toil, nor ruffled his manly brow. Second, his clairvoyance—his wonderful industry and success in gaining information which enabled him to penetrate the designs of the enemy throughout the war, whilst masking his own, and thus to play with that enemy successfully, that great national game of chess, upon which empires depended, capturing his two knights at Saratoga and Yorktown with many pawns, and finally check-mating his king.

The war of 1812 has been called our second war of independence. It was so, in a certain sense, for it was indispensable to the maintenance of it. Although that war redressed the wrongs which had led to it, it left no security that they would not some day be repeated, and hence it is evident that our real independence as a nation was not unequivocally established and acknowledged for years after it. This war was forced upon us by a series of wrongs, which no people assuming to be independent could endure. For years after the treaty of 1783, by which Great Britain acknowledged our independence, she had refused, in violation of its provisions, to deliver up the military posts she held on our frontier—she refused to interchange a diplomatic mission, and scorned, as it was said, to make a commercial treaty with us. Upon the breaking out of her war with revolutionary France, she began to impress our seamen, forcibly divert our trade in provisions, and in the sequel, by orders in council, to capture and seize our ships with whatsoever laden.

In this war, we had one material advantage over the form-

er. We had a government invested with constitutional power to call on the States and people, and thus able to combine the strength of the whole nation (which it did with but few exceptions) in its prosecution.

Our population had increased to about eight millions. Our commerce, although limited, had been gainful. Agriculture had extended and some manufactures had sprung up. On the other hand, our revolutionary debt was yet unpaid. There was but little capital in the country. Relying upon our insular position relatively to Europe and its distance, we had neglected to fortify our coasts. We had no ships above frigates, and an army only about in proportion. CANNING sneered, in the House of Commons, at the military pretensions of a nation that had but half a dozen regiments for an army, and about as many frigates, with bits of striped bunting flying at their masts, for a navy. Both which statements were nearly true. But CANNING did not reflect that with a free and self-reliant people, the sense of wrong is ever an over-match for nice calculations of strength. He did not know that our country boys take their squirrel guns along with their primers to school, becoming marksmen on the way—abecedarians there. The proficient in the two are America's marked men, some of whom made their marks in this war.

Having been cultivating the arts of peace for so many years, our reliance for the conduct of this war was upon the veterans of the former. Fatal delusion! They had stood still and rusted, whilst the age had every way advanced. The reverses in 1812 and some in 1813 requited the national error. The next year, 1814, showed in the hard fought fields of Bridgewater, Lundy's Lane, and others—that republican vim had then got into its right place.

This, our city, whose peace, order and prosperity, it is one of the proud objects of this association to promote, was entered by the enemy on the eve of the 24th of August of that year. I see many around me who witnessed that sad event. No wonder the wounded pride—the mortification of the nation at the loss of its capital, has sought relief in the

indiscriminate censure of all who tried to defend it, but failed. Our gallant member, Col. JNO. S. WILLIAMS, who held a staff appointment in our army ; all of us who were present—men and boys—know that the loss of Bladensburg was not the fault of the soldiery. He knows with what reluctance and in what perfect order, Peter, Stull, Davidson and others, left the field ; how they gnashed their teeth when they found the head of the column, instead of halting at, had passed through the toll-gate, and how they chafed almost to mutiny, when it passed down by the capitol and thus gave it up. He knows that then and there, on that hill, whilst the army was thus moving down, a committee was organized to demand of the President the dismissal of the Secretary of War, to whom all attributed the disaster, and that the President did it.

We remember the sorrow of that night, when the sky was lighted up all around by the blaze of our burning buildings, and of many a night after it. But joy came on that morning when the general gladness witnessed that New Orleans was safe, and the veterans of Wellington driven back by the heroic Jackson and his militia ignominiously to their ships !

It were superfluous to recount to you our many triumphs at sea—the capture of the *Guerriere* by HULL, of the *Macedonian* by DECATUR, and others, including entire fleets on Erie and Champlain by PERRY and MACDONOUGH ; but what tongue will not re-utter, what eye will not moisten again, in reading the words of poor LAWRENCE—“Don’t give up the ship,” with which he breathed out his patriotic, his unselfish soul ! And you, peerless BLAKELY, with your little ship of 18 guns, when, where, and how was your martyred fate ? The national renown has reaped your legacy of the capture of two ships of greater size than your own, and records your drawn battle, at night, with a frigate twice your size. Was it the effect of her fire ? Was it the jealousy of Neptune of so bold a champion for his highest honors ? Did a mast fall—a plank give way ? What dark cause was it, that envelopes your loss in such painful, such sublime mystery ?

This war taught us the lesson, “in peace prepare for war.” When that with Mexico began, we had fortified our coasts

and had increased somewhat both our army and navy. West Point had stocked the former with military talent ; our revolutionary and other debts had been paid. The country had increased in population and grown rich. But Mexico was not an enemy to be despised. SANTA ANNA, the emperor of eight millions of people, possessed talent, activity, and address, and knew well how to draw out and combine the military resources of his country, as well as how to inflame the prejudices, national and religious, of its people, against *los Americanos del Norte*. He opened the ball by attacking our army on the Texan side of the Rio Grande, which he well knew we were resolved to defend. TAYLOR defeated him at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, and driving him across that river, paused on its banks for preparation to follow in pursuit. Two lines of advance were organized—one from TAYLOR's position on the Rio Grande—the other, when Vera Cruz and its tutelary castle of San Juan de Ulloa should fall from that point. TAYLOR advanced and took Monterey and won Buena Vista. SCOTT beat the enemy at Cerro Gordo, Contreras, Churubusco, Molino del Rey, stormed the giddy heights of Chapultepec (Virginia and Pennsylvania hand to hand—SELDEN and BIDDLE first to mount the works,) and took them, and with them, what they had protected—(Quitman, by the garetta Belen—Worth, by the garetta San Antonio)—the Capital of Mexico—the halls of the Montezumas !

Unhappy Mexico ! how little have you profited by the light of republican civilization so near you—by the examples it has set you, both when we were weak and when we were strong, of moderation and humanity ! Your foremost man has put to death, in cold blood, one hundred and forty prisoners, and whilst their bodies were yet warm, filled his house with revelry, dancing, and music ! Would that the agonies of these poor victims, of their widows, their mothers, and orphans, could, like Banquo's ghost, have been personified in that unhallowed assembly, and with one general cry of *shame*, have drowned the music of its indecent orgies !

When the cruel ABDALLAH had dethroned the last of the Om-miade Califs, and placed on the throne of Damascus the first

of the Abassides, he made proclamation that he would pardon the sons of the late calif who should surrender themselves. When all had appeared except one, to the number of some fifty, he caused them to be surrounded by his soldiers and butchered, their bodies placed in a row, and covered with planks and cloths, and upon that horrible table served a sumptuous feast to his officers. The closeness of the parallel will carry ESCOBEDO and ABDALLAH, together, down to posterity—perhaps lower!!!

It is very agreeable to us of Anglo-Saxon blood and hereditary distrust of standing armies—that our victorious Mexican army was composed in so large a degree of civilians—knowing nothing of war—but who, at the “stamp of the foot” of their country, sprang to its aid from the plough, the loom, the anvil. We claim the distinction amongst all the nations of the earth, that in peace every one is peaceful, in war every one a soldier. Give us an army sufficient to defend the frontier, and keep alive “the disciplines of the wars;” let West Point continue to furnish our STEUBENS and VAUBANS; let the squirrel gun and the primer supply our citizen soldiery, and we have the elements of success in every just cause.

Diplomacy records our statesmanship, moderation and justice. It is painful to speak of our first commercial treaty with Great Britain, negotiated by Mr. Jay, in 1794. By this treaty we were prohibited from sending our cotton or tobacco in our own ships to Europe. We were permitted to trade to the West Indies in vessels only of less than seventy tons. The treaty did not restrain England from searching our ships and impressing our seamen. The motives of England in forcing this shameful treaty on our infant government, and of General WASHINGTON in lending the sanction of his great name to its ratification by the Senate, are historic mysteries, of which the light of the blessed suns which have since risen over us, furnish the full solution. England had still re-subjugation, or at least commercial domination and monopoly on the brain. General WASHINGTON knew by painful experience the horrors of war, its uncertainties, its destruction

of property and waste of capital, the widows, the agonized hearts it left, and we may conclude, that although with some foreign aid he got well through the former struggle, he doubted whether the infant Hercules he was nursing had yet acquired the brawn to wield his club, single handed, effectively against his old enemy. Always for his country—never for himself—he shouldered the odium of this disgraceful treaty, and posterity has, in its just judgment, recognized the wisdom and patriotism of his conduct. The outrages of England continued, even to an attack upon an American frigate, the Chesapeake, and the forcible seizure, from under her guns and the stars and stripes, of three, perhaps four, native American seamen! We had to fight—of course we had! When we did, England bethought herself, and concluding to let go our property, but not our seamen, proposed to repeal her orders in council with a view to peace. Mr. MADISON insisted on renunciation of impressment, which England declined. When I remind you that upon this single and naked issue between christian and enlightened nations, was shed so much blood in the latter part of this war, you can hardly credit the responses of your memories, the testimony of your ears.

Mr. SPARKS, who spoke of these things some twenty years afterwards, thought the questions of neutral rights and impressment would never be settled as long as England remained the mistress of the seas: which means, that as long as England remained a giant, and we a dwarf, she claimed the *right* to kidnap our citizens, whenever she had occasion for them! And thus we see how ingeniously nations, as well as individuals, can accommodate their ethics to their practice or their necessities. The questions so in reserve after the war of 1812, according to Mr. SPARKS, were most probably settled by our achievements in Mexico, or if they were not, they certainly were by Admiral Foote, who demonstrated at Fort Henry the superiority of iron-clad to merely wooden ships.

An English patriotic ballad runs :

“Oh, long may the *oak* be the arm of the brave,
And the might of old England still walk on the wave.”

Foote changed this complaisant pretension, thus :

The *oak* is no longer, the arm of the brave,
 Since the *iron* of freedom is launched on the wave,
 And the might of old England, thus palsied, may weep,
 Whilst the sons of Columbia walk first on the deep.

The purchase of Louisiana, as it was the most important, so it was, doubtless, the most adroitly managed of all our treaties. Upon the occasion of the general peace in 1801 this territory passed from Spain to France. The consequences of the re-establishment of that great and ambitious power on this continent, and in juxtaposition with us, under the prestige of Bonaparte, then in the zenith of his career, justly alarmed Mr. JEFFERSON. He frankly stated to Bonaparte that this establishment, if carried into effect, must necessarily change the whole foreign policy of the United States, and force them into the arms of Great Britain, as an indispensable counterpoise to his power. This argument could not fail of its weight with the determinate rival and enemy of Great Britain, and wanting the \$15,000,000, which Mr. JEFFERSON offered, he signed the treaty.

Other motives have been assigned, by rumor, to Mr. JEFFERSON, for his eagerness to get possession of Louisiana, growing out of the state of feeling amongst the people on the upper waters, and his apprehension that some irregular movement on their part to get command, by force, of the Mississippi might embroil us with both France and Spain.

This purchase of Louisiana brought us to the sea on one side. The acquisition of Florida, that "cape of land" which stretches far into the gulf, and holds out its wedding finger, caressingly, towards the diamond cluster of the Antilles, brought us to it on another. That of California brought us to the Pacific and the Gulf of California, and the Messilla Valley gave us, in 1853, a southern line of route to the latter, as we had before had a northern to the former. In 1845 the virgin of Texas, flying from her would be ravisher, became the bride of Uncle Sam; England and France standing by to forbid the bans, without reflecting how many wives or concubines they both had, less honestly obtained. Uncle Sam, with true American gallantry, defended her with his blood, and

“she has eat of his bread, and drunk of his cup, and lain in his bosom, and been unto him as a daughter.” Oregon was always ours, since the Louisiana treaty, even to 54 40, and Russian America is too recent an acquisition to have developed results. Perry, with a little of that wooing with which the lion is said to woo his brides, unlocked Japan, so long hermetically closed against christians. Our missionaries are already at work, disseminating amongst its people the sublime truths of our faith. It appears that the Japanese frankly admit the superiority of the religion of Christ to their code of Confucius, but are shocked that our practice of the former is so much below theirs of the latter! As this allegation cannot well be denied, it would seem but equitable for them to send missionaries to us, in order that whilst we impart a better faith to them, they may impart a better practice to us.

Our diplomacy has obtained from England, France, and other nations, indemnity for injuries suffered by our citizens. It will doubtless obtain from the former indemnity for the captures made by privateers fitted out in her ports, but this indemnity, claimed or paid, will not be a tythe of the profit which has accrued to her by her thereby getting the most of our carrying trade. Its final triumph may be to make the great highway of nations sacred to them all, where the unarmed ship of any, its peaceable voyagers and unmilitary cargo, shall be as free from molestation as is, upon our common roads, the unoffending traveller. England, France and America united, the three great naval powers, might accomplish this desideratum, and do many other good things, conducive to the progress of civilization and the brotherhood of man. And why should they not so unite? They have had with each other, their several fends and wars, bickerings and recriminations, but they are now at peace, and are friends, thorough and unreserved.

“The brave man knows no malice, but at once,
In peace, forgets the injuries of war.”

La Vendée, so long in stubborn revolt, is now a loyal province of France. The immemorial antipathies of the English and French are in the deep bosom of the channel

buried. The French and Spaniards who patriotically fought, reviled and assassinated each other, fraternize as the Latin race. The English and Scotch, whose very names were terms of reproach with each other, are "mingled into bliss." Are we behind these examples of moderation and magnanimity? Has the latter portion of the 19th century retrograded in civilization? Each of these nations has its virtues. Each may have its vices. We do not like NAPOLEON's experiment to supersede us, Anglo-Saxons, on this our continent, and spread over it his Latin race. But the French helped us in our national parturition, and we admire their genius, chivalry and good breeding. On the other hand, France does not like our brusque treatment of the unhappy MAXIMILIAN. We do not like England's oppression of Ireland, although it serves to give us, in the first or second generation, so many good American citizens; but we admire her sturdy honesty, and that, on a recent occasion, she refused to join her Gallic neighbor, "to gouge us when we were down." We do not like to see the poor Highlander driven out of his hereditary fastnesses to make way for the deer park, the sheep walk and the cattle range; but England may equally exclaim against us for the melting away of our aborigines, whom frontier rapacity will not suffer the national humanity to reclaim and preserve; in fine, we do not like England's rapacity in India, in Africa—everywhere, whilst we yet feel in ourselves, the same instincts, which come down from the Sea-Kings, the Vi-Kings, the Normans, through her, honestly to us, her American offspring. Let us be charitable, and allow for the necessities—perhaps the uses of national peculiarities. Savage tribes preserve and transmit their petty feuds, and fight *ad internecionem*. The mild dispensation which gives tone to the civilization of these great nations, commands them to forgive—to forget—to love.

You may have observed that amongst the enumerated powers assumed for the government, commerce is the only industrial interest named, thus indicating a more general favor toward that interest than any other. This predilection of the nation for the primogenita of civilized man, the handmaid of agriculture and the arts, continued during a great

portion of our history and prompted many provisions for her benefit and protection. To her ships are the monopoly of the coasting trade, a navy to protect them there and abroad, expeditions to explore new channels of enterprise, subsidized fisheries to raise them seamen, hospitals to receive these when sick, life-saving stations to rescue them and passengers from shipwreck, harbors, piers, sea-walls and breakwaters, the triangulation of the coast, that stupendous work of which the lamented BACHE was the genius, together with the lights that blaze all along its line to warn ships of danger whether from Scylla or Charibdis. But with all these aids to navigation, candor requires the admission that these are not the halcyon days of commerce. She has an envious younger sister. Under the compound pressure of the tariff, internal taxes and the currency, the building of her ships and a large portion of her carrying trade, are passing into foreign hands. Let us trust that these inauspicious days will ere long pass away, and commerce, beautiful in her snowy garments, be restored, untrammelled, to her heavenly appointed mission of doing the peaceful exchanges of the world, and of carrying the lessons of civilization and the story of the Messiah to the benighted regions of the globe, from pole to pole.

The postal, patent and land departments (not amongst the enumerate powers of government) are happy illustrations of our policy, energy and progress. During and at the close of the revolution there were some twenty post offices in the country. Behold in 1860, 28,000. In no other country could such an increase have taken place, for in none other could there have been occasion for it. The emigration of our people to the virgin regions of the South-west and West, has been without distinction of persons or classes. The successive waves carry the laborer, the mechanic, the lawyer, the physician, the divine, the man of letters, of taste, and even wealth, who require in their new abodes, the church, the school house and the post-office, as much as they did in their former homes nearer the great centres. Nothing but the reality would make so rapid and amazing an increase credible. The growth of our postal system is that of the

mustard seed, which planted in this congenial democratic soil, has waxed a great tree, covering the land with its multitudinous branches and yielding its daily fruit—appropriate to every taste.

One of the earliest acts of the government of 1789 was one to promote the “progress of the useful arts,” by securing to inventors the profits of their discoveries for a limited period. The beginnings of these inventions may have been, and probably were, small; but what they were or how they progressively increased up to the year 1836, we can only conjecture, for in that year all the records and all the models were destroyed by fire. We know both the number and the ratio of annual increase from that year. In the next, 1837, the number of patents issued for inventions was 425. In 1866, the number was 9,450. In the period from 1837 to 1866, thirty years, the aggregate was 65,682. Can you conceive, can you form any satisfactory idea in your minds of the vast compass of American intellect, contrivance, care, experiment—involvement in this astounding product? Or can you imagine the multifarious uses and diversified applications of these many inventions? How many new uses they have drawn for man from the elements of nature? How much they have aided that industry which “beautifies, adorns, embellishes, and renders life delightful?”

The first thought of discovery, and the first but one of patriotism—is FRANKLIN—for he brought down lightning from the heavens, and helped, next to WASHINGTON, to bring us up from the house of bondage. This double distinction of the philosopher and the statesman, has been fixed, transmitted and handed down to us, by the classical exergue, in very pretty Latinity, of a medal, struck of him, in Paris:

“Eripuit cælo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis.”

FITCH made steam a motor; PARKER invented the turbine wheel, which, but for a Frenchman, who made fame and fortune by his plagiarism, his countrymen would never have acknowledged. The acknowledgment came too late, and alas, he as well as FITCH (amongst the greatest of inventors) died poor. Ah, CADWALADER, how generously did you strive to save this “poor and broken-hearted bankrupt” from his

fate ! MORSE has had the luck to make his telegraph famous, and himself and some others that assisted him, wealthy. WHITNEY's cotton gin revolutionized the industries of the world. Who shall sing the virtues of the unpoetic sewing machine, which has doubled the profits of LYNN, and equally abridged the toil of the over-wrought housewife, or the wonders of BULLOCK's printing press. GOODYEAR turned to infinite uses the almost worthless caoutchouc. BLANCHARD turned irregular forms—gun stocks, ship blocks, &c., and then, the most irregular of all, men's heads, WEBSTERS, CALHOUNS, and others. Generous man, your own never was ! Liberal as a prince, simple in your tastes, unostentations in your gait, your example outvalues to your countrymen, the marvels of your genius—if they would only profit by it !

Our public lands have been one of the happiest ministrations, as they have been one of the most productive interests of the nation, having yielded so far, to the public treasury, one hundred and fifty-three millions of money. Starting with an accurate, mathematical and comprehensive system of survey, and beginning with a principal meridional line, followed by other meridional lines as extension required ; the whole of the public lands have been laid off in parallelograms, varying in size from 40 acres, the sixteenth part of a section, to 23,040 acres, a township—comprising thirty-six sections. The sections in every township bear the like uniform numbers, from one to thirty-six, and in every township sections Nos. 16 and 36, being 1,280 acres, are set apart for the support of common schools. It was a township of 23,040 acres which Congress granted some years since, with \$200,000 in money, to General LAFAYETTE in grateful remembrance, when the nation was rich and he was poor, of the services he had rendered when he was rich and it was poor ; and in danger too.

The recognized area of the colonies when they achieved their independence, was 341,000 square miles. The treaty of peace and independence gave them the country back, and increased the area of the United States to 820,000 square miles. Our present area including Russian America, (the area of which is estimated at 500,000 square miles) is 3,750,000 square miles.

Of the unoccupied portion of this vast domain, we have granted for the promotion of education, in addition to two sections or one eighteenth part for common schools in every township, surveyed or to be surveyed.....70,874,000 acres.

To reward our soldiers.....59,000,000 “

To promote internal improvements.....15,700,000 “

To aid railroads.....160,000,000 “

Swamp lands given up to the States.....15,700,000 “

Taken up, so far, in homesteads.....5,000,000 “

Allowing for the private claims and rights in the acquired territories more than two millions of square miles, after making all these sales and grants—the unoccupied, the unsettled region of the nation—remain undisposed of, a surface equal to nearly two thirds of that of all Europe.

The policy of granting a quarter section of land, 160 acres, as a homestead, without payment of money, and upon condition merely of settlement and cultivation, encounters, now that it has gone into operation, no diversity of opinion. All approve it. It is a just pride to this association that it was broached by one of its honorary members, the Hon. R. J. WALKER having proposed it in the Senate, as far back as the year 1836, when he represented in part in that body, the State of Mississippi.

What tho' the poor and broken down subject of the old world participate with our native citizens in the benefits of this law? Is there not enough for both and to spare? Have we the prerogative to monopolize more of these bounties of God than we can use, and to exclude others who need them and who are equally His children as we? This proposition involves the religious view of the subject, which may or may not have swayed the inner thought of the statesmen who determined the policy. The avowed argument is, that the foreigner, with “his young barbarians, all at play, and their Dacian mother” will yield more to the public treasury, in their consumption of dutiable articles than the stated price of the land, besides adding to the aggregate annual product of the country for consumption or exchange.

And how beautiful are these fields, ready for the plough as they came from the hand of nature, where these home-

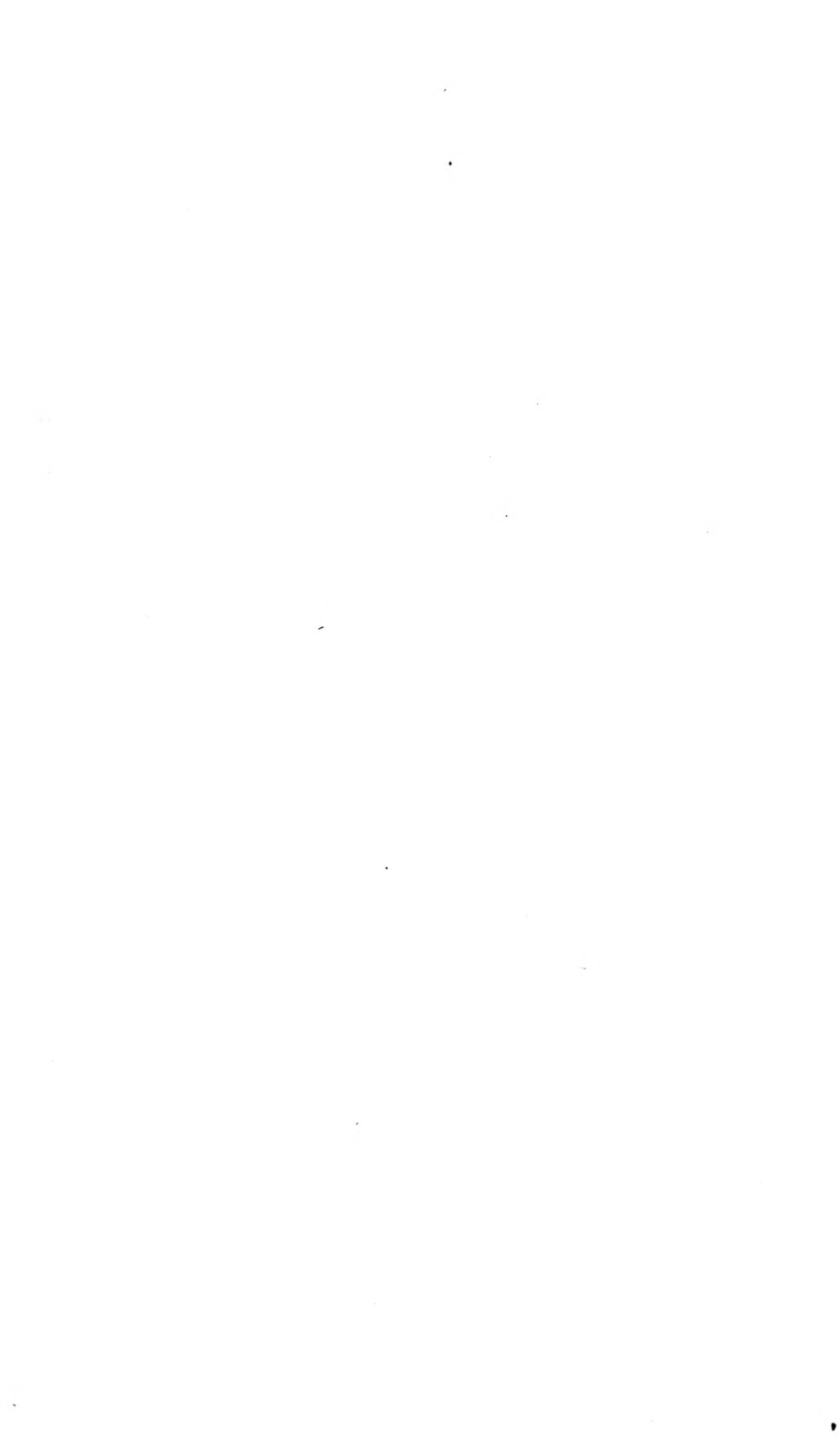
steads are being taken by all who have hard hands and primeval tastes ! How fertile of corn, comfort and content. If you had seen, as your orator has, the wife and the son of twelve years of age gathering in the luxuriant harvest, whilst the husband and father was away with his musket in his hand, you might readily imagine, as he did, that more than one of these "young barbarians," or their playmates of native blood, might be the future presidents of this great nation, for it was from the like rural scenes in which they are being reared, that the manly virtues issued and displayed themselves in our revolution, and in which they since find their favorite abode.

The mechanic arts in activity and progress, the iron horse, labor saving machinery in all the departments of industry and economy, 35,000 miles of railroad in operation, 52,000 of telegraph, ocean steamers to Europe, the West Indies, Brazil, Japan, China; our commerce on the lakes and in every sea; in the fine arts, the gorgeous beauty of the capitol, its dome, statuary, tiling and frescoes, the classic chastity of the Interior, the modest simplicity of the Post-Office, the Treasury of granite, its monolythic pilasters and its Ionic columns, fluted and waved, its buttress caps 18 feet square and of 70 tons, the unparalleled beauty of its southern and western façades; our statuary, painting, music and engraving, not largely exotie, but mostly indigenous; our churches, so grand and imposing in the cities, so spontaneous in their growth on the frontier; our costly missions to christianize the heathen; our oratory of the pulpit, the bar, the legislature and the stump; our literature, 2000 volumes published annually on history and fiction, poetry and ethics; our press—2500 newspapers, daily, tri-weekly, semi-weekly, weekly or monthly; our cities—New York, with its Fifth Avenue miles of palaces; its East river miles of masts; its Croton, Park, Street Cars and suburban Steamers. Washington, our own—the capital of 35,000,000 of freemen, unparalleled in plan, ventilation and water; its streets, north and south 80 to 100 feet wide, its avenues 120 to 160 feet, crossing them diagonally and forming at all those crossings nice little plats of various sizes and angles, which, with nu-

merous larger reservations—the Capitol, the President's, the Smithsonian, Lafayette and others, all verdant with grass, shrubbery and trees, refresh the eye and give out their vivifying oxygen. These developments mark some of the achievements in the line of progress and civilization, which serve to vindicate the right we assumed to an independent existence—to be a nation. These are some amongst the jewels which adorn the fair daughter of Columbia; these amongst the flowers of varied grace and beauty, which bedeck the national parterre.

Of the sectional disaster which has lately visited us, the events are too recent that you should be reminded of them—too deplorable for subjects of contemplation on a day of jubilee. The conflict is over and we are in peace. And as no Roman Emperor ever triumphed in a civil war, so let our choice leaders, who have carried us through this terrible strife be content with the proud sense of a high duty accomplished. Let them glory that the Union is safe—weep the afflictions which that safety has involved; let them, let us all now lend our patriotic aid to repair the breaches in our common temple of constitutional liberty! Let us be one—the greatest nation upon the earth, in sentiment, devotion and nationality!

And has women borne no part in the wonderful efforts, the astonishing successes and progress of our people? The mother of WASHINGTON trained him up to the great achievements which he accomplished. And who shall deny to woman her full share of credit, not only for training up the sons of America, to these of ours, but for stimulating, countenancing and supporting them in their toils and sufferings. Man's helpmate in toil, comfort in prosperity, solace in woe. In youth, the sparkling eye, the delicate hand, the taper foot, stimulate us to every honorable effort. As wives, they are our best counsellors. Who does not know, how next to the bliss of heaven is his, whom a true American woman "has blessed with her love and made the father of her children."



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